



DAISY QUEZADA UREÑA

QUIHICA



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Pie Projects Contemporary Art

QUIHICA

NOVEMBER 2 - 30, 2024

Essay by Alicia Inez Guzmán, PhD

it's not so much





photo by Cougar Vigil (Jicarilla Apache)

As a Mexican American artist, I am informed by my cultural background from both Mexico and the United States; I address social issues that substantiate a voice with an overarching identity of being cast aside. My work bridges the personal to the social, forming a relationship to immigration, gender inequality, labor, and class issues that have resulted in a population that has been left devalued and lost within their own culture. Using an altered lace draping technique, I work with my own garments as well as items shared by people from both sides of the US|México border. I create complex and intimate works that could be considered private in nature. The borrowed and shared garments—including my own and those from others—are transformed using porcelain slip. Drawing from the internal vulnerability carried by each garment, the works act as imprints of past states, and are a culmination of identities, collected and externalized.

– DAISY QUEZADA UREÑA

QUIHICA



The term “quihica,” from which the exhibit gets its name, stems from German polymath Alexander von Humboldt’s investigation into the customs of the ancient, Indigenous inhabitants of Bogotá, who used the term to refer to victims of ritual sacrifices. The designation meant the deaths of the ritual victims opened a new cycle of 185 moons (approx. 15 years). The term was later used by Uruguayan writer and journalist Eduardo Galeano to refer to the possibilities open to an individual as they transition from this life to the afterlife.

Quihica is a personal portrait of the artist and her memories, of which clothing carries a reminder. Sacrifice, in this sense, becomes an open-ended narrative of shifting identity, the shedding of old skins, as well as a condemnation of the societal constraints that force change.

El término “quihica”, que da nombre a la exposición, surge de la investigación del erudito alemán Alexander von Humboldt sobre las costumbres de los antiguos habitantes indígenas de Bogotá, quienes usaban el término para referirse a las víctimas de sacrificios rituales. Esta designación relata como después de la muerte de las víctimas del ritual abría un nuevo ciclo de 185 lunas (aproxim. 15 años). Posteriormente, el escritor y periodista uruguayo Eduardo Galeano utilizó el término para referirse a las posibilidades que se abren para un individuo en su transición de esta vida al más allá.

Quihica es un retrato personal de la artista y su memoria, de la cual la ropa lleva un recordatorio. El sacrificio, en este sentido, se convierte en una narrativa abierta de identidad cambiante, el despojo de pieles viejas, así como en una condena de las limitaciones sociales que fuerzan el cambio.

A RECORD OF MEMORY ALICIA INEZ GUZMÁN

In its most basic form, clothing is a kind of barrier, a means of protecting the body from the elements. But in some, if not most, cases, clothing is more than just protection. It can be the means through which one performs identity. It can mark a place in time or function as a commodity within a market system, subject to both trends and patterns of migration. It can be an extension of a social structure, delineating the work one does or where one lives. Clothing in that way is an expression of culture. But it can also be, as multimedia artist and educator Daisy Quezada Ureña says, a “record of memory.”

This is where her installation, *Quihica*, an intimate exhibition at Pie Projects Contemporary Art in Santa Fe, dwells — the space between memory and acts of labor. Here, the artist takes her own clothing, coats the surface with layers of kaolin clay and then fires the piece in a kiln at high temperatures. The garment itself burns away and what’s left is a delicate imprint of its folds, textures

and even fibers. Here, the mundane becomes numinous.

The garments are from fleeting moments in her own life and range from dress pants, a blouse, a dress worn during undergraduate studies, a graduation gown and even underwear. Each is then placed near or precariously on an implement or building material. There are modular trusses — *cerchas* — an I-beam, a door, a grass sickle — *rosadera* — road ties and a ratchet strap. There is also soil and a mesh-like piece of metal that both came directly from the U.S.-Mexico border region.

Much of her previous work has employed this tension between clothing, class and migration. One prime example is her installation at the Denver Art Museum’s *Mi Tierra*, in which she collaborated with local youth affected by immigration policies to craft an arresting visual dialogue about displacement and the industries that exploit the displaced, especially those who hail from countries

across Latin America. Some students had made the journey north themselves. One young woman gave the artist a dress that dated to her early life in El Salvador. Another young man gave his father's work glove. And yet another, gave a beanie that harked back to his experience of being unhoused in Chicago. Each article had its own story and lived experience, all of which were cast in porcelain and installed with yet another fragment of the U.S.-Mexico border wall.

In *Quihica*, she turns that practice inward to examine the feeling of being caught within what are the too-often dehumanizing systems of capital

Aspects of labor become visible in the implements and construction materials, which double, in another sense, as an extension of her family. *Quihica*, in fact her entire practice, gestures obliquely toward a community of builders and makers she calls kin, networks that stretch from her to Mexico. She, too, is a builder and a maker and her garments vessels for the teachings or *enseñanzas* to which she has been endowed. The works give form to this push and pull — between capital and community, social norms and creating anew. The result is a self portrait. “It is me in distress,” she says, “sacrificed and conforming to society.”



segura estoy



to do something of consequence, no.3





extension of the flesh

no permanence can be found in it



no permanence can be found in her



to do something of consequence, no.2

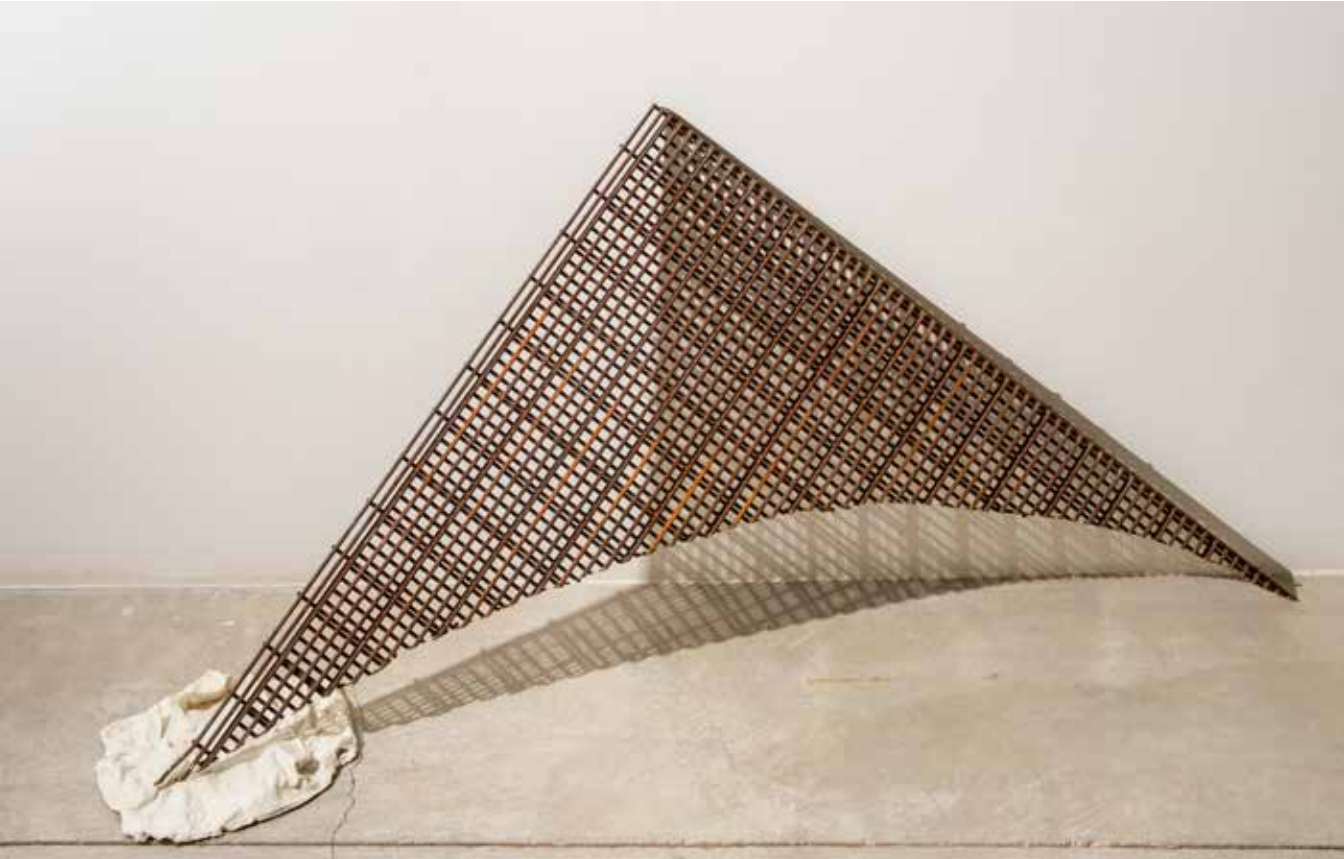
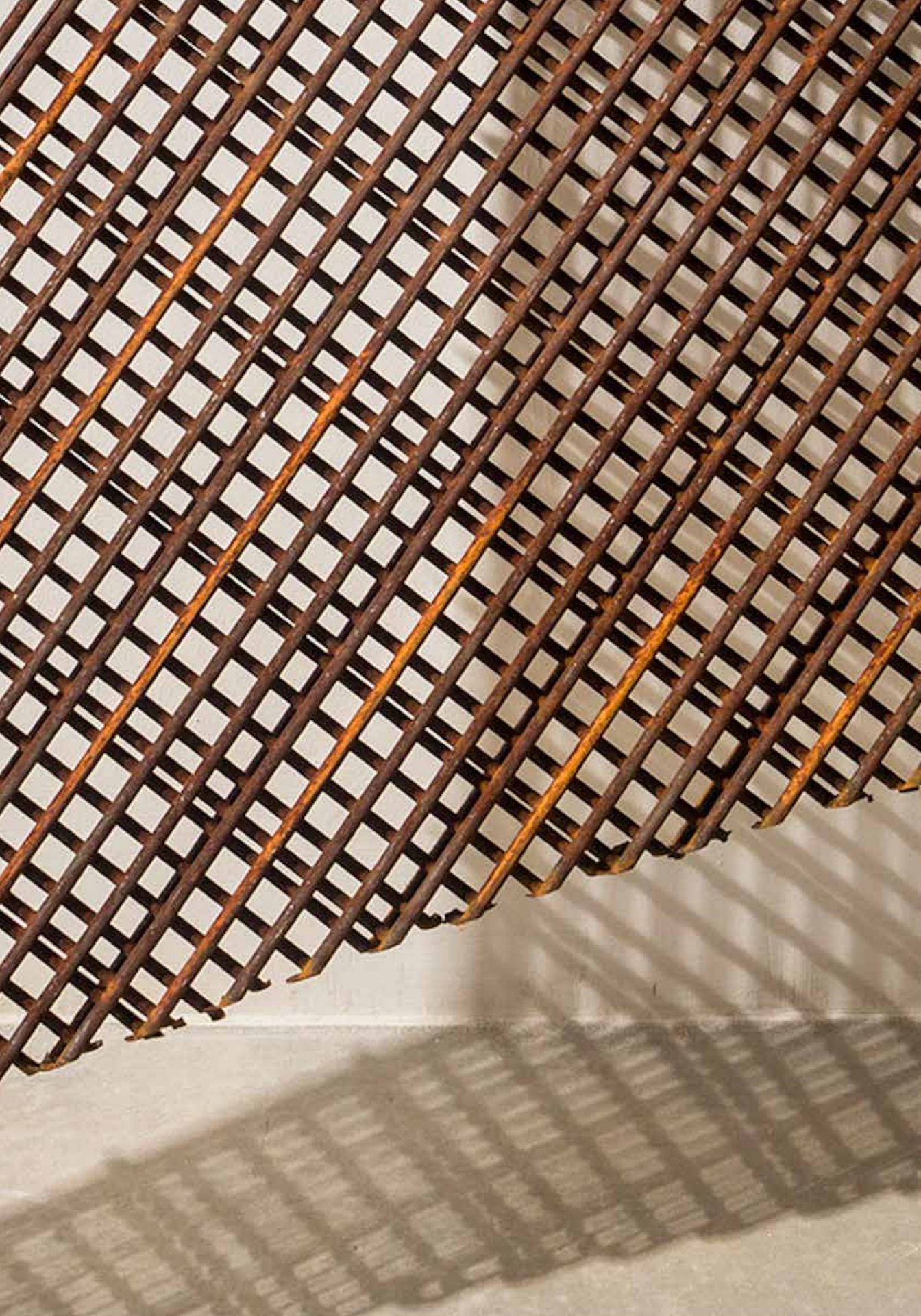


*to do something of
consequence, no.6*



to do something of consequence, no.7





to do something of consequence, no. 4

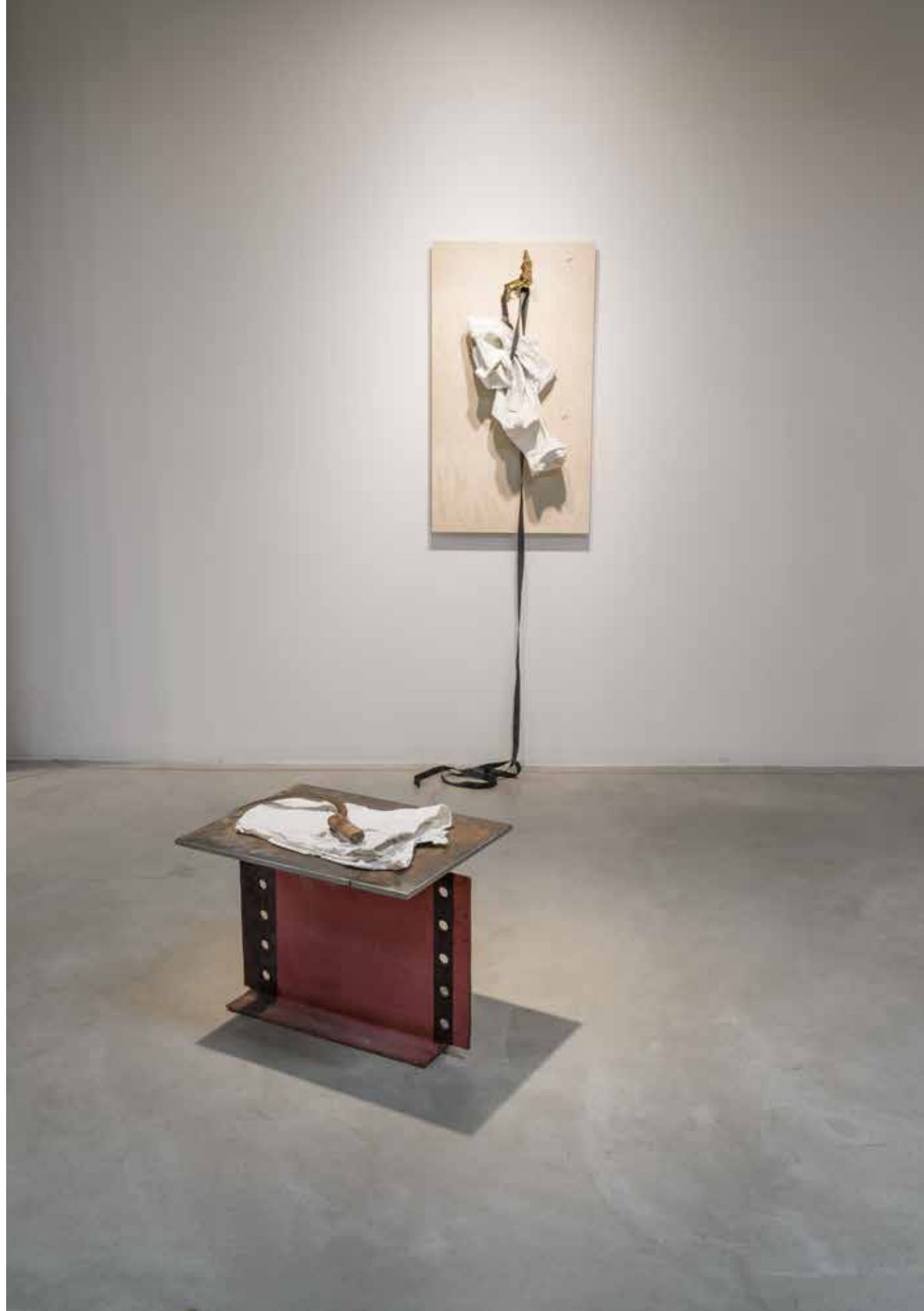
to do something of consequence, no.1





no permanence can be found in them





CONTRIBUTOR **ALICIA INEZ GUZMÁN**

Raised in the northern New Mexican village of Truchas on land passed down through many generations of women, Alicia Inez Guzmán has written about contemporary art, histories of place, identity and land use in New Mexico and throughout the Southwest. She brings this knowledge to her current writing on the nuclear weapons industry's impact on workers, women, communities of color and the environment. Alicia holds a Ph.D. in Visual and Cultural Studies from the University of Rochester in New York. Awards include a 2017 Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant, a 2021 Society for Professional Journalists' Sigma Delta Chi award for excellence in journalism, and 2024 MOLLY National Journalism prize in investigative journalism.



ARTIST ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This exhibition and catalog would not have been possible without the invaluable support of Carolyn Kastner, PhD. Her early guidance, along with that of Alicia Inez Guzmán, PhD, were instrumental. Their roles as moderators and discussants during the exhibition's panel created a space for meaningful dialogue.

I extend a sincere gratitude to Alina Borsa, the gallery owner and curator, for her commitment, trust, and generosity. Her care and attentiveness are central to the realization of this work.

I am also grateful to Emmanuel Ortega, PhD, for his thoughtful editing of the translated exhibition text, which made the content accessible to historically marginalized communities across the Southwest Turtle Island,

also known as *Estados Fronterizos* and the American Southwest.

Additional thanks go to the Institute of American Indian Arts Studio Arts Undergraduate Program and Michael Patton (Oglala Lakota), Shane Hendren (Diné), Jessie Kelly, Estevan Maestas, and Angelica Gallegos for their time and meaningful contributions.

I also acknowledge the generous support of curators Brandee Caoba, Cecilia Alemani, and Hoor Al Qasimi.

Finally, I want to recognize my beloved family, as well as the communities across the state of New Mexico that sustained this work. Your emotional labor, belief, encouragement, and presence continue to shape and strengthen this practice.

ARTIST **DAISY QUEZADA UREÑA**

Daisy Quezada Ureña is a multi-disciplinary artist, faculty and Dean of Academic Affairs at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She obtained her BFA in Studio Arts from the Santa Fe University of Art and Design, before completing her MFA with Emphasis in Ceramics at the University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware in 2014.

Within her practice, she creates ceramic works, installations, and artist's books that thematically connect to ideas around identity and place in relation to social structures that cross imposed borders.

She cofounded *Present Cartographers*, a collective invested in strategies and perspectives from national and international artists and writers amid a migration crisis and resurgence of territorial claims in local and international border zones. As an extension of her practice Quezada Ureña has also worked alongside non-for-profit organizations like *El Otro Lado/The Other Side* and

Downtown Aurora Visual Arts that impact community at a local level by bringing art to youth. In 2023, Quezada Ureña was recognized as a United States Latinx Artist Fellow—one of only two recipients from New Mexico since the fellowship's inception.

A national and international exhibiting artist, her work has been featured in Summerhall (Edinburg, Scotland); New Taipei City Yingge Ceramics Museum (New Taipei Taiwan); Icheon Ceramics Festival (Icheon South Korea); The Denver Art Museum (Denver, Colorado); and in *Women's Work*, an exhibition at the Lyndhurst Mansion in Tarrytown, N.Y., alongside artists Judy Chicago, Louise Bourgeois, and Cindy Sherman.

She was invited to participate in the 12th SITE SANTA FE International by curator Cecilia Alemani, and the 25th Biennale of Sydney, curated by artistic director Hoor Al Qasimi, taking place in 2025 and 2026 respectively.



CHECKLIST

p. 5
it's not so much
 2024
 clay, fabric, ratchet strap,
 vintage Mexican doors
 77.5 x 39 x 11 in.
 192 x 99 x 28 cm.

p. 17
segura estoy
 2024
 porcelain
 30 x 8 x 5 in.
 76 x 20.5 x 13 cm.

p. 19
***to do something of
 consequence, no.3***
 2024
 porcelain, hand-woven
 rope, steel, soil (U.S./
 Mexican border)
 86 x 30 x 40 in.
 218.5 x 76 x 101.5 cm.

p. 21
extension of the flesh
 2024
 porcelain on railroad spike
 10.5 x 11.5 x 3 in.
 26.5 x 29 x 7.5 cm

p. 22
***no permanence can
 be found in it***
 2024
 porcelain on steel 'cercha'
 5 x 23 x 1.5 in.
 13 x 58.5 x 4 cm.

p. 23
***no permanence can
 be found in her***
 2024
 porcelain on steel 'cercha'
 5 x 23 x 1.5 in.
 13 x 58.5 x 4 cm.

p. 27
***to do something of
 consequence, no.2***
 2024
 porcelain, nylon,
 steel, clamp
 84 x 11 x 4 in.
 213.5 x 28 x 10 cm.

p. 28
***to do something of
 consequence, no.6***
 2024
 porcelain, steel
 54 x 4 x 4 in.
 137 x 10 x 10 cm.

p. 31
***to do something of
 consequence, no.7***
 2024
 porcelain, rosadera, steel
 2 x 17.5 x 22.5 in.
 5 x 44.5 x 57 cm.

p. 33
***to do something of
 consequence, no.4***
 2024
 porcelain, steel wall segment
 45 x 63 x 11 in.
 114.5 x 160 x 28 cm.

p. 35
***to do something of
 consequence, no.1***
 2024
 porcelain, ratchet
 strap, wood
 42 x 24 x 6 in.
 106.5 x 15 cm.

p. 36
***no permanence can
 be found in them***
 2024
 porcelain on steel 'cercha'
 5 x 31 x 1.5 in.
 13 x 79 x 4 cm.

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Photography by Eric Swanson
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Book design by Montana Currie

Catalog by Pie Projects Contemporary Art

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ISBN: 978-1-300-11885-5

